

Ancient Egypt Unit

Grade 10 Social Studies

Unit Outline:

- Egypt: Land of the Pharaohs
 - Historical Overview
 - Government
- Society and Culture
 - Religion
 - Social Organization
 - Everyday Life
 - Urban and Rural Living
 - The Economy
 - The Arts
 - The Sciences

Definitions – Please search the text book for the answers to these definitions (74-121)

- Wadis
- Dynasty
- Hieroglyphics
- Monarchy
- Pharaoh
- Nomes
- Nomarch
- Polytheistic
- Ankh
- Mummification
- Corvee Duty
- Polygamy
- Demotic
- Secular
- Religious Cults



Geography

- The ancient Egyptians thought of Egypt as being divided into two types of land, the 'black land' and the 'red land'.
- The 'black land' was the fertile land on the banks of the Nile. The ancient Egyptians used this land for growing their crops.
- This was the only land in ancient Egypt that could be farmed because a layer of rich, black silt was deposited there every year after the Nile flooded.





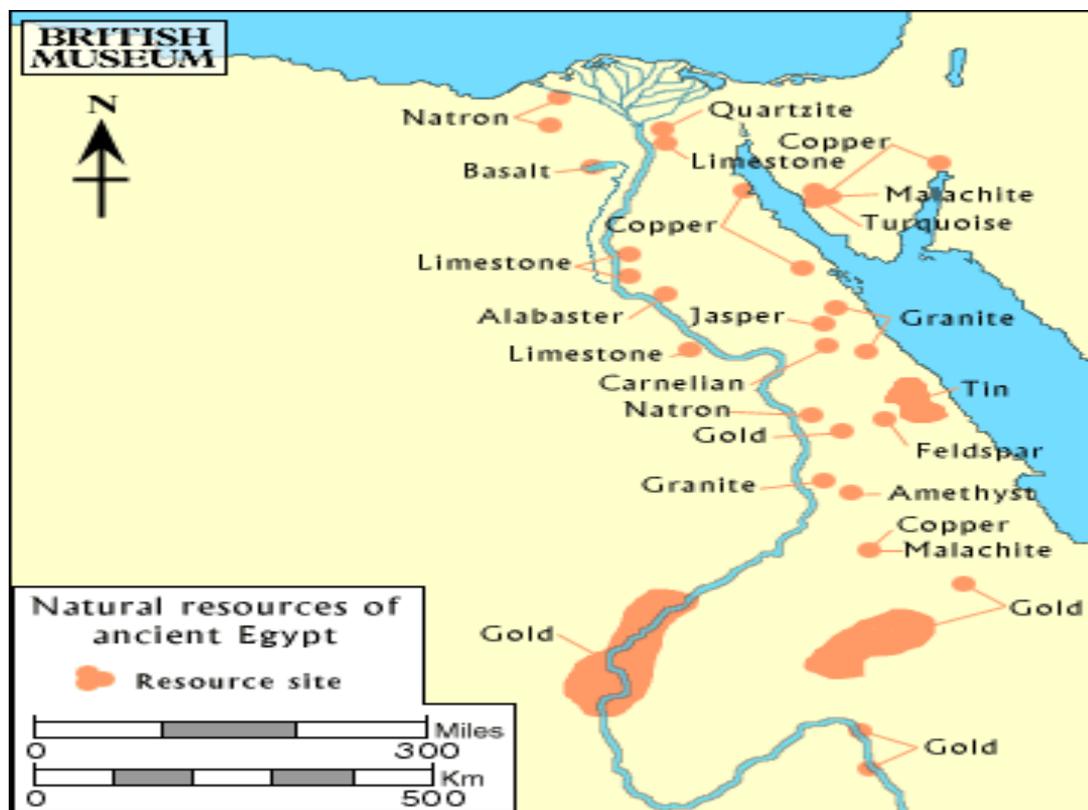
Geography Cont.

- The 'red land' was the barren desert that protected Egypt on two sides.
- These deserts separated ancient Egypt from neighbouring countries and invading armies.
- They also provided the ancient Egyptians with a source for precious metals and semi-precious stones.



Ancient Egypt – The British Museum

<http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk/geography/explore/main.html>



Egyptian Oasis





Historical Egypt

- Egypt is one of the most [fertile](#) areas of Africa, and one of the most fertile of the countries around the Mediterranean Sea.
- Because it is so fertile, people came to live in Egypt earlier than in most places, probably around 40,000 years ago.
- At first there were not very many people, but gradually Egypt became more crowded, so there was more need for a unified government.
- Around 3000 BCE (5000 years ago), Egypt was first unified under one ruler, who was called the [Pharaoh](#).



- From that time until around 525 [BCE](#), when Egypt was conquered by the [Persians](#), Egypt's history is divided into seven different time periods. The first being Predynastic Period 3100BCE to 2650BCE
- The other six are called the Old Kingdom (the First Intermediate Period) , the Middle Kingdom, (the Second Intermediate Period), the Late Dynastic, Greek Period and Roman Period.

“Unlike Mesopotamia, Egypt has almost no existing record of independent city-states.”

The Kingdoms of Egypt

Old Kingdom 2650 BCE-2134 BCE

The [Pyramids](#) were built in this period as great tombs for the Pharaohs.

They were built by [people](#) who were usually [farmers](#), like most people at that time.

**About the same time, another great civilization was arising in [Sumeria](#).



1st Intermediate period 2134BCE – 2040BCE

Middle Kingdom 2040 BCE – 1640 BCE

- Pharaohs are threatened by the independence of local governors
- Egypt recruits a standing army
- The city of Luxor gains prominence.
- Lots of trade from Palestine and Syria



2nd Intermediate Period

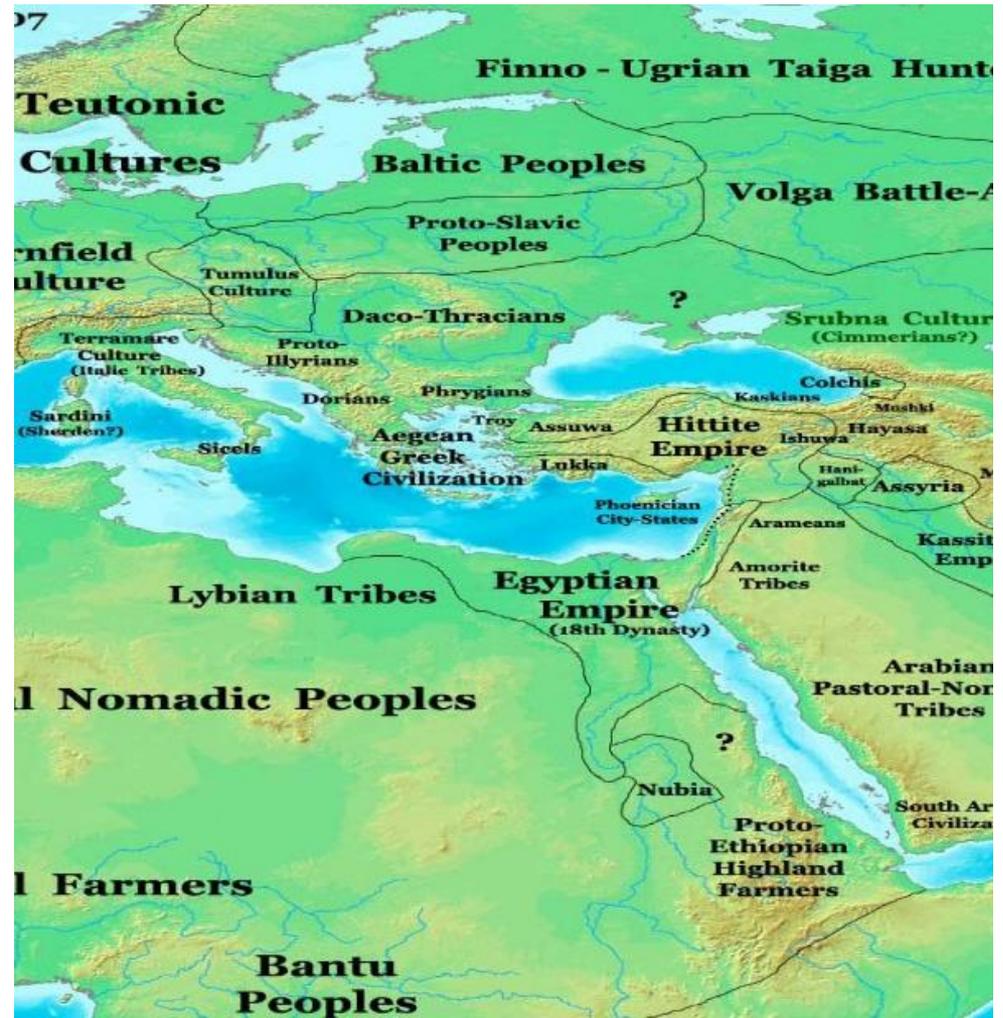
- *Hyksos* dominate Egypt
- They introduce horse-drawn chariot, copper arrowheads and daggers, curved-blade swords and compound bow.



2nd Intermediate period 1640BCE – 1550BCE

New Kingdom 1550 BCE – 1070 BCE

- The empire extends into Southwest Asia
Egypt was the worlds strongest empire.
- Egypt recruits and extends army and develops.
- Empire stretched to Euphrates River and Taurus Mountains
- King Ramses II Rules
- “Became a living god”



Late Dynastic 1070 BCE – 332 BCE

- Decline of the Empire begins
- Royals and High Priests struggle for power.
- Egypt lost territories abroad showing weakness and attracting invaders.
- Finally invaded by General Piankhi of Nubia, then ruled by Assyrians and Persians.



Greek Control 332BCE- 48BCE

In 332 BCE [Alexander the Great](#) conquered [Egypt](#) with a Greek army. At first the Egyptians thought he would make them independent again, but he did not.

Alexander made Egypt part of his own empire. When Alexander died in 323 BCE, his general Ptolemy (TA-low-mee) took over Egypt as his own territory.

He and his successors (all called Ptolemy) ruled Egypt until the Roman [Augustus](#) conquered it from the last Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra in 30 BCE. The Ptolemies succeeded in reconquering much of [Israel](#) and Syria.

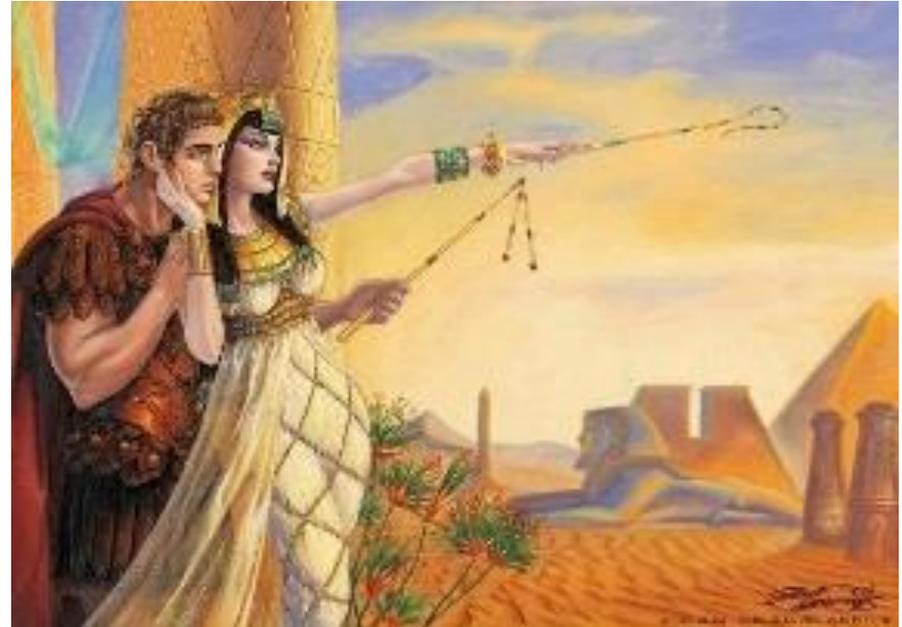
They brought [Greek culture](#) and the [Greek language](#) to Egypt, though ordinary [people](#) continued to speak [Egyptian](#) and worship [Egyptian gods](#).



Roman Control 48BCE

– 395CE

- By the time of the Roman [Julius Caesar](#), around 48BCE, the [Ptolemies](#), the Greek kings of Egypt, were much weaker than the Romans.
- When Julius Caesar visited Egypt, Cleopatra, begged him to help her fight a civil war against her teenaged brother and [husband](#), Ptolemy XIV.
- Julius Caesar did help her, but he left Roman troops all over Egypt, and also took Cleopatra (klee-oh-PAT-rah) back to Rome with him as his girlfriend. When Julius Caesar was [assassinated](#) in Rome in 44 [BC](#), Cleopatra returned to Egypt with another Roman leader, Marc Anthony (who was also her boyfriend).
- In a civil war between Julius Caesar's nephew Augustus and Marc Anthony, Antony and Cleopatra were defeated. They killed themselves (or perhaps were killed) in 30 BC, and the Romans took over Egypt.



Islamic Egypt (700-present)

As part of the rise of the new religion of [Islam](#) in Western Asia, the Arabs established a [new empire](#) centered on Syria.

They soon conquered Egypt as well, so that just as under the [Assyrians](#) and then the [Persians](#), Egypt came under the rule of West Asia.

Gradually most Egyptians converted from [Christianity](#) to [Islam](#), and learned to speak [Arabic](#) (the remaining [Christians](#) in Egypt are called Copts). A new capital was established in the north at Cairo (KYE-row).



Egyptian Government

The Pharaoh (FARE-oh) owned all of Egypt, and everything in it.

All the [land](#), all the tools, all the [animals](#), and all the [people](#). He (or sometimes she) could tell anybody what to do, and they would have to do it. This is called a [monarchy](#).

Power was passed down to the eldest “chief wife’s son” as opposed to the children of the “lesser wives”. In history daughters had also claimed the throne.,



Government Continued

When the Pharaoh was weaker, especially in the [First](#) and [Second Intermediate Periods](#), sometimes he (or she) could not make the rich people do what he (or she) wanted them to.

Often the Pharaoh had to compromise with them. But at least in theory, the rich people had to do whatever the Pharaoh said, and ordinary people had to do whatever the rich people said.

Egypted was broken up into 42 provinces called **Nomes** and governed by an official called a **Nomarch**.



Egyptian Justice and Law

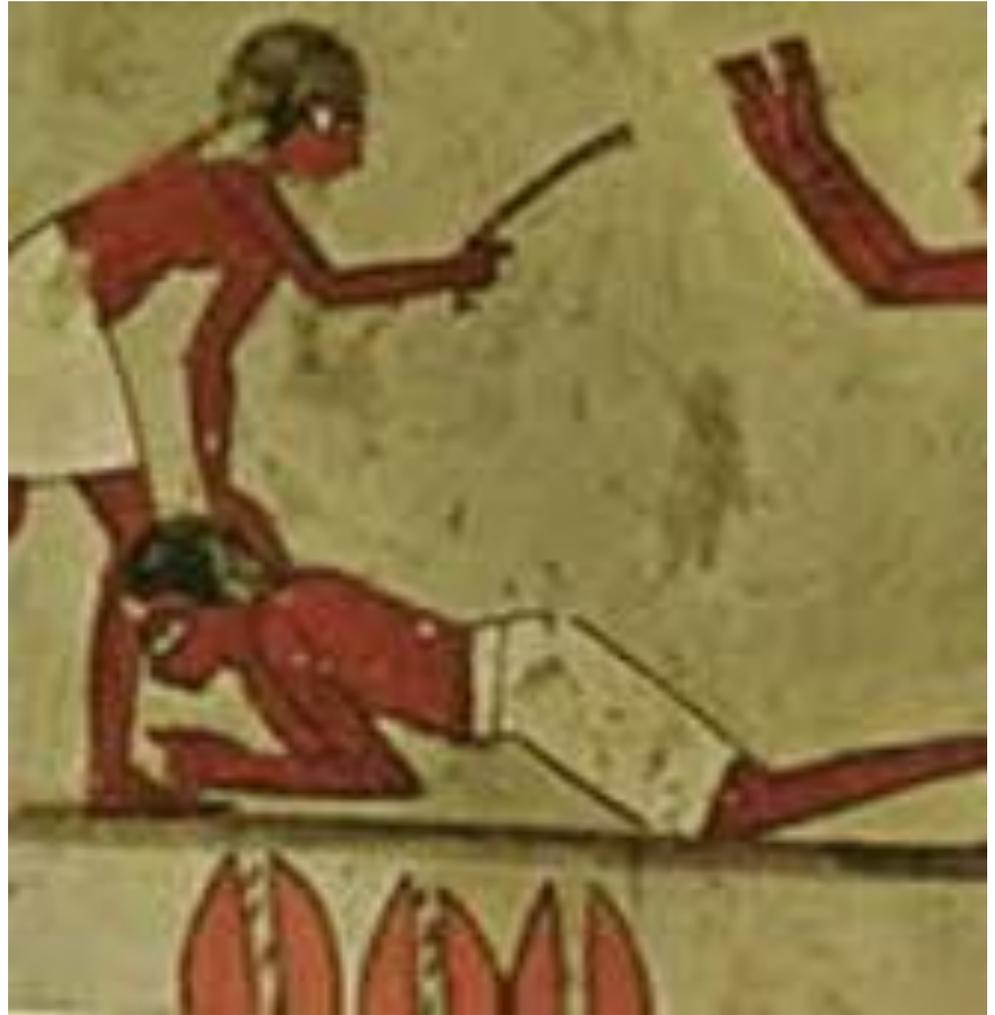
Each Nome had their own court.

Egyptians had harsh punishments for breaking the law. The laws were based on a common sense view of right and wrong

Next, there were many laws in Egypt, as there were many punishments for breaking a law.

One of the punishments were one hundred strokes of a cane, and if the crime was worse, five bleeding cuts were added.

Other punishments included branding, exile, mutilation, drowning, beheading, and burning alive.

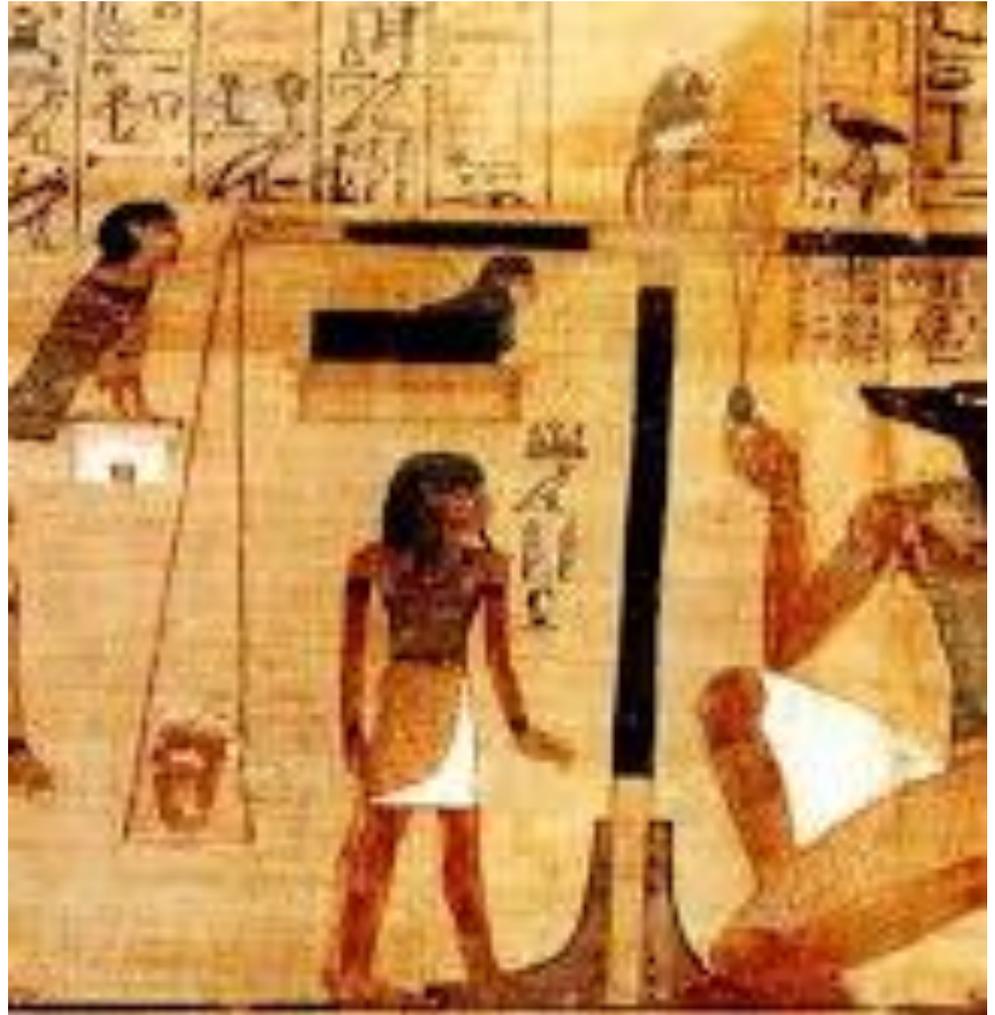


Egyptian Justice and Law

The worst crime was tomb raiding because the treasures in the tomb were sacred. A lot of punishments were fatal, such as drowning, beheading, and burning alive.

Most nomarch controlled justice in their nomes.

If a criminal ran away and couldn't be caught, their family would receive punishment for their crime.





Egypt: Society and Culture – Gods and Death

Egypt was polytheistic throughout the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom

Some of these gods were Anubis, Osiris, Isis, and Horus. Egyptians worshipped these gods with animal sacrifices and with incense and many processions where people carried the image of the god from one place to another.

Egypt belonged to the gods, and that the Pharaoh was the representative on earth of the gods, or maybe a kind of god himself, and so everything in Egypt sort of belonged to the Pharaoh.

When you died, Anubis would weigh your soul against a feather, and if your soul was heavier than the feather (with bad deeds), you would be punished.

After you died you went to a new world, just like this one, and so they put into your grave everything you would need in the next world.

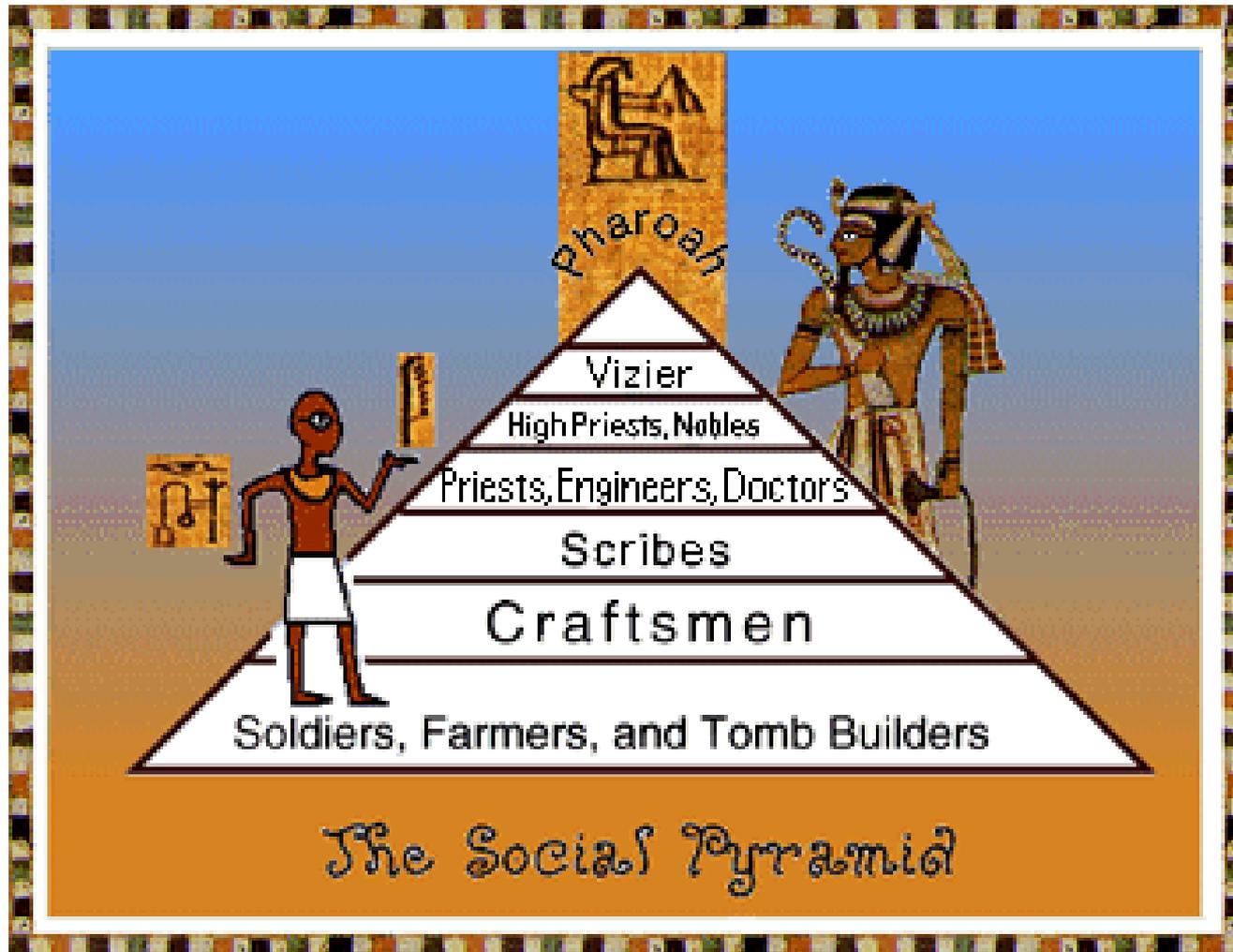
Religion

- But little by little some Egyptians began to convert to [Christianity](#), and by the time of the [Great Persecution](#) in 303 CE, there were many Christians in Egypt.
- After the [Roman Emperors](#) became Christian and the persecution ended, most of the people of Egypt seem to have converted to Christianity.

Religion

- The [Persian](#) invasion of Egypt in 539 BC doesn't seem to have made any difference to Egyptian religion. The Egyptians just kept right on worshipping their own gods. But the Persians are known for their religious tolerance.
- When [Ptolemy](#) took over Egypt in 323 BC, that did make a difference. Under Greek rule, the Egyptians did begin to worship some Greek gods, although they kept on worshipping the old Egyptian gods as well.
- Greek people in [Athens](#) began to worship the Egyptian goddess [Isis](#). They learned about Isis from [traders](#) sailing over from Egypt.
- Persians 500BCE – NO change, worship same Egyptian gods
- Greeks 323BCE – Believed in Greek and Egyptian gods
- Romans 0-300CE – Christianity
- 300CE- Great Persecution
- 600-700CE and after- Conversion to Islamic State.

Social Organizations



Society

- In Ancient Egypt there were definite social classes. At the bottom of the "Social Pyramid" were soldiers, farmers, and tomb builders, who represented the greatest percent of the Egyptian population.
- The workers supported the professionals above them, just as the base of the pyramid supports the rest of the structure.
- Above the workers were skilled craftsmen, such as artists, who used primitive tools to make everything from carts to coffins.

Society

- Above the craftsmen were the scribes. The scribes were the only Egyptians who knew how to read and write, and therefore had many types of job opportunity. A scribe's duties ranged from writing letters for townspeople, to recording harvests, to keeping accounts for the Egyptian army.
- Priests were devoted to their religious duties in the temples at least three months out of every year, during which time they never left the temple. At other times they worked as judges and teachers.
- Viziers was the pharaoh's most trusted advisor. He oversaw many of the key functions of government including building projects, the state archives, and the state judiciary system.

Writing

- The ancient Egyptians believed that it was important to record and communicate information about religion and government. Thus, they invented written scripts that could be used to record this information.
- The most famous of all ancient Egyptian scripts is [hieroglyphic](#). However, throughout three thousand years of ancient Egyptian civilization, at least three other [scripts](#) were used for different purposes.
- Using these scripts, [scribes](#) were able to preserve the beliefs, history and ideas of ancient Egypt in temple and tomb walls and on [papyrus](#) scrolls.

Women

Unlike the position of women in most other ancient civilizations, including that of Greece, the Egyptian woman seems to have enjoyed the same legal and economic rights as the Egyptian man *at least in theory.

This notion is reflected in Egyptian art and historical inscriptions.

It is uncertain why these rights existed for the woman in Egypt but nowhere else in the ancient world.

It may well be that such rights were ultimately related to the theoretical role of the king in Egyptian society.



Education

- Not very many boys and girls went to school in Ancient Egypt. Most of these boys and girls came from rich families and went to scribal school.
- They went to school so maybe one distant day they could grow up and enter the royal service, maybe even a famous pharaoh or wealthy scribe. In scribal school, they still used the utensils of a scribe: a reed brush, ink made out of soot and water, and the world's first paper papyrus.
- If you were not going to study to be a scribe, you would probably not go to scribal school. However some people who were not scribes did have a scribal school education.
- Instead you would become an apprentice. For example, if you wanted to become a doctor, you would go to work with a doctor and learn from him.
- If you wanted to become a baker, you would become a baker's apprentice and work with him to learn how to be a baker.

Clothing/Cosmetics

Both men and women in Egypt wore tunics which were sewn to fit them.

These tunics were like a long T-shirt which reached to the knees (for men) or to the ankles (for women). They were usually made of [linen](#) and were nearly always white.

Most Egyptians, both men and women, do not seem to have covered their heads with any kind of cloth. They often went barefoot, but sometimes they wore [leather](#) sandals.

Both men and women wore blue and green eyeshadow and black kohl eyeliner, when they were dressed up.

Men wore their hair short, while women wore their hair down to their shoulders. Both men and women wore [gold](#) jewelry if they could afford to.



Agriculture

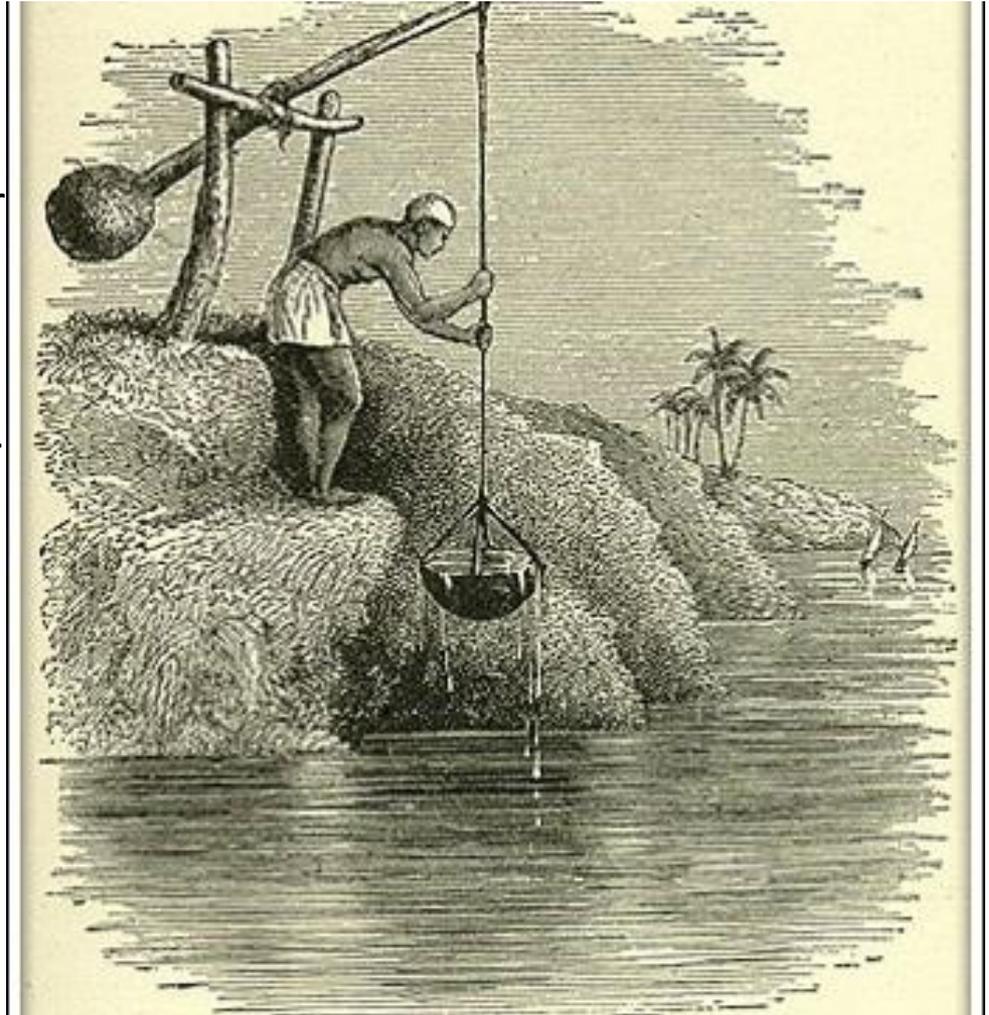
The ancient Egyptian [economy](#) was based on farming. Farmers had to give 3/5 of their crops to the pharaoh as a tax.

Farming land was called "black land for crops." Irrigation was VERY important for farming. Without irrigation, farming would have been impossible in the desert of ancient Egypt.

Irrigation is watering dry land by using streams, canals -- even by carrying water back and forth in skin bags. The Egyptians were the first to use irrigation methods. Flooding of the Nile was important for growing crops. Farmers worked by the rise and fall of the Nile in a yearly cycle.

They never needed fertilizers because the flood soil was so rich. The Egyptians believed that when Osiris, the god of death and rebirth, was dead, the river was low, but when Osiris was alive, the Nile river would overflow.

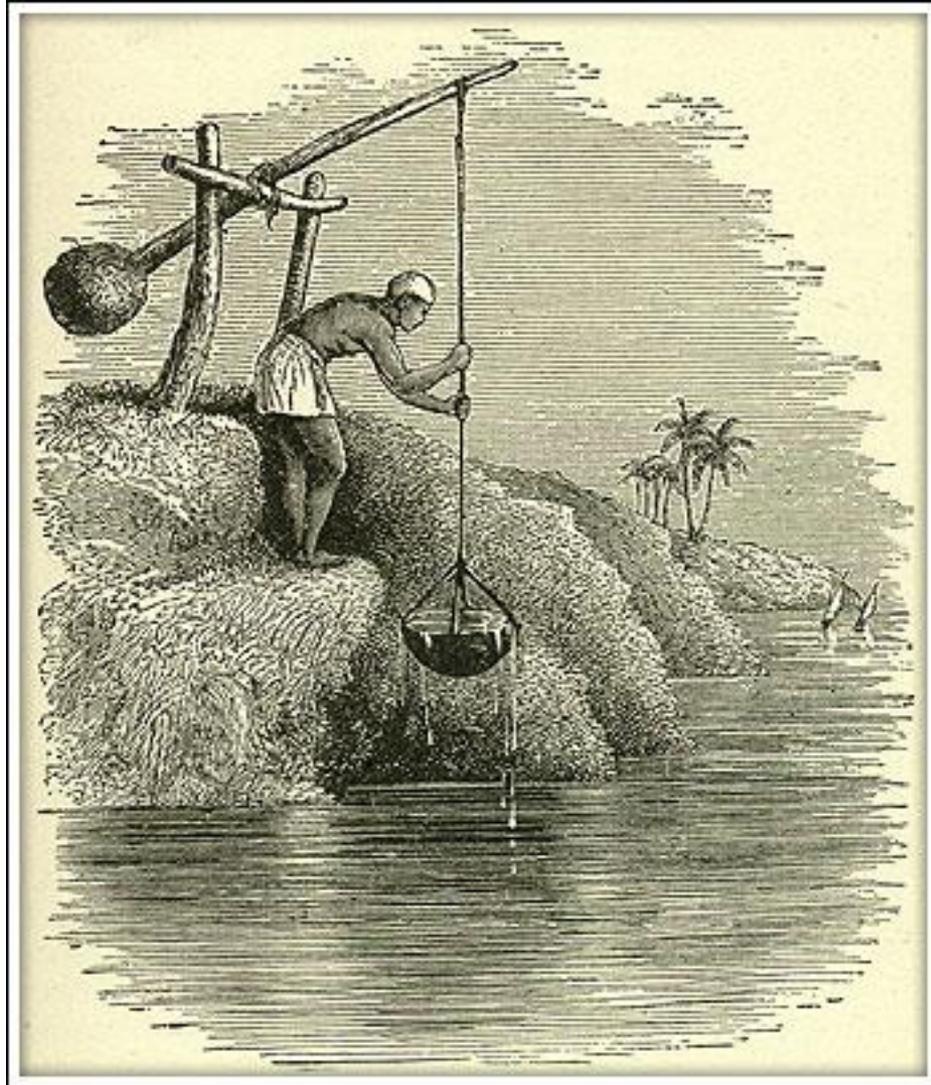
Farming jobs included watering, plowing and [sowing](#). Egypt's most important export crop was cotton.



Literature

- Writing in Egypt goes back to pretty much the earliest writing anywhere. Nobody really knows yet whether the Egyptians figured out how to write for themselves, or whether they learned it from the [Sumerians](#), who also began writing about the same time, about 3000 [BC](#).
- The Egyptian form of writing, [hieroglyphs](#), does not look the same or work the same as the Sumerian form of writing, [cuneiform](#). So if they did get the idea from the Sumerians, the Egyptians certainly changed it a lot.
- What we have left of Egyptian writing, like [Egyptian art](#), mostly comes out of tombs. Because of this, most of what we have left is prayers (because that is the kind of thing you put in people's tombs).
- Other writing like laws, letters to your [mom](#), and lists of who gave their fair share to the [temple](#) mostly has rotted away, over the years.
- We don't know whether the Egyptians wrote novels or stories, but if they did then these stories have also rotted away. Probably they didn't write much literature, or some of it would have been saved.

The Shaduf



The Shaduf

Pyramids

- People tend to think that Egyptian styles stayed the same for the whole period of Egyptian history, but that's not true.
- The [Egyptians](#) built different kinds of buildings at different times, just like any other group of people.
In the beginning, they built mainly mastabas, a kind of tomb with a flat roof like a house. Then throughout most of the [Old Kingdom](#), the Egyptians built the [pyramid](#) tombs which are now so famous.
- In the [Middle Kingdom](#), the mastaba tomb came back again, although in a more elaborate form for the Pharaohs. No more pyramids were built.
- Then in the [New Kingdom](#) there was a lot of building that was not tombs: temples for the gods especially, but also palaces for the Pharaohs.